(b) the main reasons for the short fall; and

(c) the timely steps, if any, taken to achieve the collection targets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) The budget estimates for (i) customs and (ii) Excise duties during 1998-99 are Rs. 48148 and 57425 crores respectively. The trend of revenue collections indicates that the collections will fall short of estimates. The extent of shortfall, however, will be known only at the end of the current financial year.

(b) Fall in international prices of several commodities and sluggish growth in domestic manufacturing sector are the main reasons for short fall in the revenue collections.

(c) Revenue position is constantly monitored. All possible measures are being taken including gearing up of administrative machinery to maximise revenue collections.

Updating of Recepits of Premia by LIC

65. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that LIC asks the Policyholders to produce receipts to reconcile missing entries of premium paid by them;

(b) why there is no system of regular updating of receipts of premia in the LIC's offices;

(c) why LIC harasses its customers by threatening 'gaps' in their policy if receipts are not produced; and

(d) why there is no system in LIC of sending cumulative statements each year in respect of premia received by it till that year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) to (c) The LIC has a system of regular updating of receipts of premium in their officies. The Policyholders are asked to produce receipts only if there is any discrepancy on account of certain gaps in the payment of premium.

(d) Premium receipts are issued to the policyholders for each payment. In case premium receipts are lost by the policyholder, on request duplicate receipts are issued. 85% of the branches of the LIC have since been fully computerised and they serve about 95% of the total policies of the LIC. In branches which are computerised, it is possible to give cumulative statements if the policyholder demands for the same.

Effect of Hike in duty on imports of Gold

66. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated imports of gold into India during 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(b) the reasons for the spurt in gold imports; and

(c) the effect of recent hike in import duty on gold imports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) The quantity of gold imported into India during 1997-98 was 635.786 tonnes. The estimated import of gold into India during 1998-99 is expected to be around 550 tonnes.

(b) There was spurt in import of gold in initial months when import of gold was allowed through nominated agencies to take care of unsatiated pent-up demand.

(c) The effect of recent hike of import of gold would be fully appreciated after a couple of months.

Rescheduling of Loans given to Cement and Steel Companies

67. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any suggestion from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commarce and Indsstry to the effect that the loans of cement and steel companies who have defaulted on repayment to Financial Institutions and Banks be rescheduled;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by Government thereon?